(d) As regards Khadi/handloom, no relaxation has been given to any zonal railway.

Removal of encroachment from railway lands

2525. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have taken any actions during 2005 to remove encroachments from their land particularly around big stations;

(b) if so, the extent of the land retrieved around big stations; and

(c) if reply to part (a) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARAINBHAI RATHWA): (a) and (b) Railways have removed encroachments from Railway land, including the land around railway stations big or small, and retrieved approximately 89 hectare of Railway land from encroachers during the calender year 2005.

(c) Does not arise.

Examinations/Interviews conducted by RRB

2526. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of examinations/interviews conducted by Railway Recruitment Board for appointments in North-Frontier Railway during the last two years;

(b) whether selections have been made against each category for which examinations were conducted;

(c) how many people have been selected from Assam, more particularly from Barak Valley, category-wise; and

(d) how many vacancies still exist in the NF Railway and when they are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARAINBHAI RATHWA): (a) 2004-05—10 examinations, 2005-06—09 examinations and 06 days interview.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Selections to Group 'C posts are made by Railway Recruitment Boards on all India basis. State-wise or region-wise statistics of the selected candidates are not maintained by Railway Recruitment Boards.

(d) There are 10,530 vacancies on North-East Frontier Railway as on 31.1.2006. Recruitment is a continuous process and therefore, no time frame can be fixed for the same.

Recruitment from North Eastern Region in Railways

2527. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are giving priority for development of the North Eastern Region;

(b) if so, whether the priority would be given for candidates coming from North Eastern Zone by N.F. Railway; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, category-wise and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARAINBHAI RATHWA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Direct recruitment of Group 'C' posts on Indian Railway is made by Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) within their respective jurisdiction. Candidates from any part of the country are free to apply in response to advertisement issued by any of the RRBs. Since Railways are an AH India organization serving as an effective instrument of national integration, no discrimination or favour is done against or for any candidate on the basis of his place of residence. Selections are basically done on the basis of merit position of the candidates in the respective examination.

Reduction in rail fares

2528. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reduced the rail fare of AC-I and AC-II class only;